

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the time taken by the Examiner to review Applicants' present application. This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Official Action mailed September 28, 2006. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Claim Objections

Claim 10 stands currently objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.75. Applicants respectfully submit that this objection is moot in light of the cancellation of Claim 8.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Mazda

Claims 1, 2, 7, 9, and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mazda (WO 94/04100).

Claim 1, as amended, recites, "each engaging plate comprises a concave surface to complement a convex surface of a complementary one of the members." Claim 7, as amended, recites, "a first member comprising a convex portion" and that "the first engaging plate comprises a concave portion complementary to the convex portion of the first member."

Figure 5 of Mazda, on the other hand, does not show that the members and engaging plates have complementary convex/concave relationships to each other. Applicants believe that the Examiner recognized this by not rejecting previous Claims 8 and 10 in light of Mazda and respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 7 are similarly novel in light of Mazda.

Boyd

Claims 1, 2, 7-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Boyd et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,425,773).

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite "wherein at least one of the members comprises a substantially circular shape." In Boyd, the primary shape of each of the members, as shown in FIGURE 5, appears to be approximately rectangular. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 7 are novel in light of Boyd.

Bryan

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bryan (WO 00/13619). Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the members "are complementary to each other to allow lateral movement, anteroposterior movement, and axial rotation of the engaging plates relative to each other during use." The members 41 and 42 of Bryan are not complementary to each other to allow the relative movement recited in Claim 1. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 2 are novel in light of Bryan.

Conclusion

Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. Other than as explicitly set forth above, this Amendment does not acquiesce to statements, assertions, assumptions, conclusions, or any combination thereof in the Office Action. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of the pending claims.

An extension of two (2) months is requested and a Request for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 with the appropriate fee is filed herewith.

Respectfully submitted,
Marino *et al.*

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